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AUTHOR Dalton, Kathleen
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ABSTRACT

Theodore Roosevelt's education is used as a case-study to illustrate how educators' informal messages influence students to stay in their social class. These messages can be transmitted either consciously or unconsciously, through tone of voice, body movement, facial expression, and unspoken expectations or assumptions. As the first social experience outside the home, the teacher has immense responsibility as an identity builder during a vulnerable period and is viewed by the student as a person who will make sense out of the world. The informal messages the teacher transmits perpetuate the status of the child being taught. Because Roosevelt's education was designed to meet his interests and needs, he received messages of his uniqueness and potential greatness at every turn. His opinions were considered worthy of attention; teachers were persons to listen to, learn from, argue and discuss with, but fallible. He took for granted that he deserved the wealth, advantages, and political power that belonged to his class. His education endowed him with a sense of what it means to be upper class, just as poor children learn the opposite in ghetto classrooms. It is an extreme example of the ego-enhancing possibilities of an individually designed education. Classrooms today tend to have the opposite effect. To the question raised by this paper, "Are our schools stifling the identities, the human possibilities of the children of America by teaching them the informal messages of class roles?", the answer must be yes. (CK)

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THE EDUCATION OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT:

FORMAL LEARNING AND ITS INFORMAL MESSAGES

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KATHLEEN DALTON

DEPT. OF HISTORY
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

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THE EDUCATION OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT:
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Robert Coles in the fifth volume of his Children of Crisis wrote that children's class standing affect their self-images: in fact, he declared that "culture and class become matters of a child's fantasy life and affect the tone of his or her self-regard."[1] Not only does class provide the material for fantasies and dreams, but it offers children heroes, villains, role models, and a sense of their own possible futures. Coles points out that children's "ambitions and ideals" are erected with the mortar of class expectations, just as they will come to define their own success or failure in life within the structures of class aspirations. Coles is primarily interested in how children's class-related definitions of self are formed by their families, but it is also worth asking what role education plays in the development of children's class-related identities.[2] That, in short, is the aim of this paper.

Education is much more than the formal learning of specific subject matter. It is learners actively searching through their educational experiences for truths and understanding that will help them make sense out of themselves and the world at large. As education takes place so do identity formation and socialization. Learners look to teachers as special representatives of the social order, interpreters who may or may not offer them a useful definition of reality. Learners hear implicit interpretations of themselves as they are educated; they hear subtle but nonetheless clear informal messages about social relationships, shared cultural values, the distribution of power and wealth in society, and what roles may be open to them later in life. The informal messages

transmitted through education teach children about their place in the world -- who they can be and who they ought to be. I contend that, through the transmission of informal messages, education teaches learners class roles -- the behavioral boundaries and expectations that are defined by society as appropriate to their class, and that learners often form a class-related identity connected to these class roles. Using Theodore Roosevelt as an in-depth case study in which education and its informal messages affected both his socialization and his identity formation, I show how Roosevelt came to play a distinct class role and developed an identity that was very much related to his high class standing.

Before delving into Roosevelt as a case study, it is necessary to outline in general terms the varied ways in which informal messages are communicated through education.

In an article on the transmission of cultural definitions of feminity Alan Graebner stated that:

> In every society culture is transmitted at two levels: explicit and tacit. Parents and other adults instruct the young by explicit reminders, explanations, warnings, and advice. They also teach, however, without conscious, verbal instructions. This tacit transmission conveys ways of behaving, thinking, and perceiving that are unconscious and taken for granted.[3]

In the last decade scholars have outlined the ways in which women's identities are affected by implicit cultural transmission of sex roles -- i.e. women have been taught lessons about who they are and can be within proscribed cultural boundaries defining appropriate feminine behavior. Women have picked up cues and subtle meanings from educational institutions, among other agencies of cultural transmission,

about how to be female in America. Informal messages is a shorthand way of describing the varied ways that cultural cues are implicitly transmitted to learners.

Just as women and men are taught sex roles, upper, middle and lower class people in America are taught class roles through the informal messages of cultural transmission. Teachers, as conservers and representatives of the culture at large, are the primary conveyors of informal messages. Use of language, attitudes of deference or condescension, or even unarticulated aversions or favoritism may communicate the teacher's views on a child's class standing loudly and clearly. The parallel between the sex role and class role is essential. The subtle informal messages about sex and class transmitted in an educational setting are equally powerful in teaching learners what they can be and what their place in the world should be. For example, women have been taught until recently that success for them is defined in personal terms, i.e. marriage, children and fulfullment through human relationships. The informal messages within their educational experiences which help elaborate this role based definition of success appeared in many forms. A teacher might ask female students to play a helper role looking after weak or sick classmates. A classroom lesson on film may portray men's success in terms of monetary or status achievement while describing a woman as a success in a supportive role in interpersonal relationships. It may be communicated to a female student that the teacher assumes that it would be "natural" for her to want more than anything else to have a family when she grew up. A teacher may,

with a smile or praise, reward nurturant and caring behavior in girls, aggressive and instrumental behavior in boys. Similarly, teachers communicate class roles to students using the same unspoken informal messages. A teacher may tell stories to lower class children which implicitly link lower classness with crime. In discussions of successful business leaders or politicians teachers may, without knowing what they are doing, point out the class distance between the successes and the children, making it seem impossible to identify with or emulate such models of success.

Informal messages, however, are not always sent consciously:

> In fact, the teacher, too, is often unaware of what is happening. The tone of voice, subtle body movements, facial expression, spatial arrangements of objects and people, unspoken (often unexamined) expectations, the things left unsaid -- these are some of the ways in which the tacit dimension of culture is conveyed.[4]

In addressing a lower class child a teacher may speak in a frightened tone of voice, may expect and require little beyond the stereotypes of lower class behavior, may outline for the child low horizons for the future without being fully conscious that there is a transmission going on of class role expectation and that the child hearing this may be profoundly affected by that transmission. Teachers may be totally unaware that their class attitudes are molding their expectations of their students, yet these very expectations have been proven to be not only easily communicated to the students but highly influential in the way students define their intellectual potentials. Rosenthal and Jacobsen's Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectation and Pupils' Intellectual Development serves as testimony to the importance of

unspoken teacher expectations and behavior as they affect the ways children achieve and the way children view their own potential for success.[5] Though the teacher does not say to the student, "I believe you will fail because you are a sharecropper's child," the informal message of lowered expectations has nevertheless been communicated.

There is a scanty literature on class roles per se, but within writing about poverty and wealth in America the contours of class roles can be seen. For instance, within American's views about class are many shibboleths. We assume that as part of an upper class role, rich women will be neurasthenic, neurotic, controlling and unnurturant, less than perfectly domestic, or female. Middle class women are supposed to be sensible, materialistic and supportive. Poor people are assumed to be more prone to crime, more given to impulse and sentiment, and less clean. Many years ago when Howard Becher asked teachers about their attitudes towards students they told him about their definitions of lower class roles; teachers believed that lower classness created vulgar, dirty, ill-mannered, excessively sexual, and aggressive youngsters.[6] Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, for their The Hidden Injuries of Class, interviewed an upwardly mobile working class man named Frank Rissarro who described lower class roles to them on the basis of his own experience. Rissarro viewed lower classness as "chaotic, arbitrary, and unpredictable" behavior, lack of self-control and self-discipline and lack of ability to control their own destinies.[7]

Take masculinity as an example of the mythological character of class roles. One of the underlying assumptions of class in America is

that as men become more upwardly mobile they become at once more civilized and more emasculated. Without actually saying the "college boys" who work with him are effete and less manly than men with dirt under their fingernails, Frank Rissarro, in interviews with Sennett and Cobb wondered what men lost by upward mobility--to his mind white collar jobs "aren't real work."[8]

Many working class men interviewed were uncomfortable about upward mobility, for they associated education, refinement, manners, and propriety as class attributes which lessened a man's ability to keep in touch with his own nature. Scholars have never spelled out completely how masculinity is connected with class roles, but vivid examples are readily available. In Streetcar Named Desire Stanley Kowalski is a caricature of a working class male--he is not cerebral but physical--a primitive, muscular beast who bellows in monosyllables--yet is undeniably masculine. Though Stanley Kowalski is only a stereotyped character he represents the commonly held belief that maleness is linked to the man who works with his body rather than his head, who is driven by impulse rather than calculation. Edith Wharton offers a contrasting male type--Lawrence Selden in House of Mirth--the upper class castrate. He is highly civilized, educated, proper and urbane, and his fine sensitivities

hold him back when he is faced with a moral dilemma. Lawrence Selden stands by ineffectually while Lily Bart, the woman he loves in a characteristically lukewarm way, is driven to self-destruction.

←---Giving further evidence that class and masculinity are connected within the American mind, Peter Filene has suggested that the anxiety and self-consciousness about masculinity in the early twentieth century corresponded with, and may very well have been a result of, upward mobility and the rise of the new middle class organization man.[9] Though class roles cannot be defined in any hard and fast manner, they are implicit cultural assumptions which guide our every day interactions and affect our self-conceptions.

In fact, class roles do take hold of every day lives in the most tangible ways as education proceeds, because they serve as prisms through which teachers view and evaluate students. In my own varied teaching career I have seen class roles at work in the most obvious ways. In 1972 I substituted in a newly integrated junior high school in suburban Maryland where I heard teachers discussing among themselves why working class youngsters were naturally prone to violence. Their definition of lower middle class roles led them to expect disorder and physical abuse from the students, and they were not disappointed. Class roles led these teachers to

prepare for pitched battle at the beginning of each year. In stark contrast, I found myself teaching recently in a wealthy, highly selective prep school, where more than one daughter of a President has been educated, and I was advised about a wholly different set of ground rules for teaching. I was told that the students were wonderful and cooperative, that they were the cream of the crop intellectually, and that I would have to be careful about what I said to them and how I graded them because their parents would go straight to the headmaster with complaints. They were assumed to have rights and capacities that the lower middle class students I taught did not. My experience is not unique; other teachers I know have heard the same advice to new teachers based on class role definitions. Sennett and Cobb also ran across class role expectations at the heart of teacher-student relationships when they interviewed teachers in the Winston School in Boston. Defending their own rigidly disciplinarian and fearful attitude toward lower class students, teachers told interviewers, "These children come from simple laborers' homes where the parents don't understand the value of education."[10] Not only do such assumptions alter the positive potential within a teacher-student relationship, but it is conveyed to the student as a statement about who he or she is in the teacher's mind.

In a similar way students pick up informal messages about the teacher's assumptions about how far the student can go in society. When a child wonders, "What can I become?" the teacher helps provide the answer. Among a hundred possible examples, one stands out in my mind. In the early 60's one teacher-guidance counsellor in a small town in Northern California habitually directed poor black students into vocational programs, advising them not to go to college because he believed that the American economy was still closed to blacks, especially poor blacks. In this case more than the guidance counsellor's class attitudes were operating for he, like many do today, viewed America as a closed social order. Unwittingly teachers share their world view and their political philosophies with their students. The widespread belief in the dominance of American politics and economics by a power elite has been spread in part in part by the writings of New Left social critics of the 60's like C. Wright Mills, who hoped to radicalize the populace rather than inhibit social change. The net effect of the popularization of the belief in a power elite, however, has been to impose a self-fulfilling and reactionary prophecy on the lives and wills of lower and middle class young people who accept this pessimistic world view as an

accurate definition of reality. When the belief that there is no social justice or equality of opportunity becomes so much a part of conventional wisdom, especially among the poor, it stifles action and hope. As teachers pass it on this belief is internalized by students as a definition of who they can become, what is possible for them, how things will work when they grow up. Teachers who are both decent and dedicated to changing class injustice in America pass on this myth of the dominance of the power elite to students without being aware that they are at the same time instructing students in their own powerlessness.

Implicit assumptions about class roles and teacher's pessimistic world views are not the only way that informal messages are conveyed through education. The literature of women's studies has focused on role models and identifications as ways in which women have been limited as far as the range of possible identities available to them within the culture. Of course, this is true of class as well, and within educational settings the range of role models presented to learners varies according to class.

Students' political consciousness is formed in part by interaction with role models who can familiarize them

with the political process. To learn about government as a distant and awesome, perhaps threatening presence, is often the lot of poor children in America; most of their role models have not been politically effective or active; few of them are taught by teachers who have had political experience and few ever have a chance to identify with political figures. Although it is an extreme case, I can offer a contrasting example from the education of upper class 8th grade government students whom I observed closely this year. Not only did this class have a teacher who had worked in a presidential campaign, but they heard speakers who treated them as potential political activists. They were visited by Alice Rivlin, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office and Senator Frank Church, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as a Congressman, an investigative reporter, an affirmative action lawyer, and a public relations man from the Republican National Committee--all of whom spoke to them as if they were adults. They not only had exposure to the people who play leadership roles, but they were encouraged to believe that these avenues for the exercise of power were open to them. Because, as members of an elite stratum of society, they were viewed by the speakers as the future leaders of America there was no awareness of

social distance or intimidation of the students by the people in politics. No fear of political authority was evident. In fact one distinguished speaker told them he was "honored" to be able to talk to such an outstanding audience. Could such a statement be made in Bedford-Stuyvesant?

Of course, students build their sense of self and their sense of their own efficacy out of more than ideas, class roles, identifications, or aspirations. Ego ideals are built upon much more than occupational aspirations,

for they are a person's complex inner set of limits and goals, products both of culture and personality. Yet, as Robert Coles points out, privileged children often set higher goals for themselves and strive for and push themselves toward achievement as if it were part of the natural order of the world for them to succeed. One privileged eleven year old boy described his own perfectionist ego ideal writing in an essay for school that "I'd like to be able to say I don't make any mistakes, but I do, and when I do, I feel bad. My father and mother say that if you train yourself, you can be right almost 100% of the time."[11] Here Coles uses an example that shows how parents provide much of the stimulus for a class-based ego ideal in children, but schools and educators, as Rosenthal and Jacobsen suggest, have done exactly the same thing by setting up levels of expected performance for their students according to class. Despite his recognition that there are some "idiosyncratic variations" Coles states flatly his view of the psychological effects of class: "Even as a migrant child or ghetto child learns to feel weak and vulnerable, a child of well-off parents learns to feel, in many respects, confident."[12]

Because education usually serves as children's first social world outside the family, as their first chance to think the private thoughts inspired by the world of books, as the first refuse from which to critically evaluate what they have learned at home, and as their first experiment in being an autonomous individual functioning separately from parents, it carries a significant emotional burden. Barbara Finkelstein has shown in her psychologically insightful

article, "Reading, Writing and the Acquisition of Identity in the United States 1790-1860" that children by learning to read acquire the possibility of a new independence from their families, even from past acculturation, for as they are educated a whole new world of meaning can be opened to them.[13] Books and knowledge can offer an enlivening alternative reality to children, and education can play a crucial developmental role, accelerating or thwarting the individuation process. The interaction between teacher and student is emotionally charged and significant for students because of their neediness for guidance, encouragement, and kindness to help them through the vulnerable stages of separation from parents and the trials and errors of creating their own identities. As we learn from social psychologists who study the self concept and its social dimensions, sociologists who study reference groups and the social bases of the ego, and ego psychologists like Erik Erikson who has traced the stages of ego development through its increased contact and integration with the social world, people construct their identities out of a thousand and one social interactions based on intimacy, distance, guidance, patronization, kindness, mistrust, anger, indifference, idealization and acceptance. The sense of self that eventually emerges from the history of these social interactions is built out of the raw material of the past. As the person internalizes selected societal values, through interaction with others, as the self identifies with emotionally significant figures and interacts with them, testing out likenesses and differences, and as the emergent self adopts, incorporates or rejects a variety of social roles, a definition of self comes into being.[13a]

The educational relationship between teachers and students, a social interaction which may serve as a formative model for later interactions in the students' life, is invested with special emotional weight and a particular authority because students commonly assume that teachers are in fact representatives of culture, speakers of truth, interpreters of reality, walking superegos who help students define the "shoulds" and "oughts" until they are ready to do that by themselves. In developing an identity students often turn to education as the authoritative agent of society that can help them bring together all the scattered parts of their idiosyncratic and social experience. This "making sense" function within education is an enormous power. As students actively try to discover who they are and what they can become they implicitly ask of their education aid in making sense out of, integrating, and interpreting what has and what will happen to them. In this way education plays a prominent role in both identity formation and socialization. While other institutions in society, notably the family, play crucial roles in the process of identity formation and socialization, education stands alone in the unique style in which it touches people's lives.

Although this statement of the ways in which education plays a part in conveying informal messages to students outlines how that communication occurs, a more vivid and personal exploration of the role education can play in the development of student's class-related identities can be found via a case study. Theodore Roosevelt is a perfect choice because he provided us with a rich historical record of his daily educational experiences described in detail in letters, diaries, memoirs, and recorded in photographs as well. His

education is also worthy of study because he provides an extreme example of the ego enhancing possibilities of upper class roles conveyed through an individually designed education.

When Theodore Roosevelt was asked to write a short autobiographical sketch in the 1880's he began, not by speaking of his own accomplishments, but by stating that his father came from "dutch knickerbocker stock."[14] Although he would not admit it, being upper class was important to Theodore. It defined who he was; it offered him countless advantages in life. While he was a politician he had to be careful to pay credence to his democratic and egalitarian ideals, but he was first and foremost an aristocrat. When he was born in 1858 T.R. became a member of one of New York's distinguished old Dutch families. The Roosevelts had made a name for themselves as civic leaders and merchants ever since their earliest ancestor arrived in America in the 17th century. The Roosevelts associated with the best people in New York society, a small elite proud of their old family names, which were buttressed as a matter of course by appropriate amounts of wealth and gentility. Theodore's grandfather Cornelius Van Schaack Roosevelt, a parsimonious merchant of the old school, was a millionaire and one of the ten largest property holders in Manhattan.[15]

Along with this high class standing went achievement. Among the ancestors who contributed to the way that Theodore would look at himself and family expectations for his own success were members of the Continental Congress, soldiers in the Revolutionary army, Archibald Bulloch, the Revolutionary "President" of Georgia, a great-uncle who was a political

lieutenant for Andrew Jackson, military heroes of the Mexican War, and many public officials who represented New York city's political interests, including two congressmen and a state assemblyman.[16] Theodore's father was a noted philanthropist and community leader who had counted President Abraham Lincoln and his secretary John Hay, among many others, as his personal friends. His uncle was a prolific sports writer and novelist who served on the Committee of Seventy that assaulted and overthrew Boss Tweed, and one of his Southern relatives made a name for himself as a Confederate diplomat and blockade runner during the War Between the States. A definite heritage of distinction stood as a tall measuring stick next to which Theodore would have to stand. Altogether this heritage was more of a benefit than a liability, despite the pressure for performance that it would place upon Theodore's young shoulders; it blessed him with a sense of specialness and pride about his family. He could look upon himself as part of a worthy tradition.

The foremost benefit that Theodore would reap from his class background was an extraordinary education. In an era when public education was often a rigid bore and a failure, Theodore studied almost whatever he wanted under flexible and varied private tutelage. His earliest education was conducted at home by his Aunt Annie, his father, and by tutors who instructed him at his own pace giving him a great deal of personal attention and encouragement. The obvious fact that each lesson was designed for him, and for him alone, conveyed to him how unique and deserving he was. It also meant that he became accustomed to being the center of attention, the depository for the tutorial exertions of others, the prince who required amusement. Barbara Finkelstein has shown how educational contexts that

were designed like Theodore's for the flexible education of a well-born individual offered a richer experience than the regimented Lancaster - inspired urban classrooms in which individual needs were submerged by the imagined necessity of restraining the group. Theodore did not have to be herded into a classroom like other students in the Victorian age, nor was he required to learn at the pace set by classmates. Instead, family members and tutors made learning seem both easy and fun to Theodore, his academic success and his ability to think of himself as a capable student were made possible, perhaps inevitable, by the educational context in which he found himself. Informally he was being told that he was worthy of attention and that he was competent. Theodore soon developed a preference for being on center stage; as Henry Adams later observed, he became a genius at monopolizing conversations, seasoning any talk with frequent "I's."[17]

Theodore's educational advantages did not stop with personalized instruction; no effort was spared to see that he learned whatever he wanted. To add to the study already undertaken at home Theodore's father took the family on two trips abroad, and the Roosevelts approached travelling seriously , turning their trips into explorations into European and Middle Eastern culture and history. Theodore recalled that the second trip was "a really useful part of my education" for "We went to Egypt, journeyed up the Nile, traveled through the Holy Land and part of Syria, visited Greece and Constantinople...."[18] As they traveled along the Nile Theodore's father instructed him in the history of Egypt and Palestine, reading aloud from the Old Testament and then taking them to some of the places they had studied. Meanwhile, fourteen year old Theodore read

many books on natural history, his favorite academic subject, and he began his own collection of Egyptian birds. Later in the same trip the children were placed with a German family to study the language and to learn about German culture. This made a lasting impression on Theodore who especially admired among the Germans the "capacity for hard work, the sense of duty, the delight in studying literature and science, the pride in the new Germany."[19] Although it was customary for upper class Americans in the 19th century to make ritual Grand Tours of Europe, the Roosevelts, like the James family from which Henry and William James emerged, treated Europe, and for that matter the Middle East, as territory to be explored for the sake of learning, not as sights that a well-travelled person ought to be able to mention upon returning to the bosom of New York society. Theodore's father took him to the bazaar in Cairo and let him bargain by himself; he planned a special trip to Hastings because of Theodore's interest in history and father and son discussed England's past along the way. Theodore's father arranged for him to play with children of different nationalities, and he brought interesting people back to their hotel to tell his son stories. Through his travels Theodore gained a depth of knowledge and range of experience that few children of any class or time ever have, and he quite naturally came to love learning.[20]

Theodore's father wanted to cultivate that love of learning. He did this in a variety of ways. Reading aloud as a family group was a way of sharing learning and making knowledge a bond of intimacy between the family members. In teaching his son religious exercises and supervising morning prayers Theodore's father "imbued us with the

feeling that it was a privilege rather than a duty ...' to be together learning and praying.[21] Theodore's father was skillful in tying his approval and love for his children to their academic success, and soon Theodore was eagerly competing with his siblings for his father's approval by writing summaries of the sermon they heard each Sunday morning. Theodore's father was also careful to weave discussions of the childrens' studies into everyday family conversation so learning became an often reinforced and never compartmentalized aspect of their daily lives. Most significantly Theodore's father attempted to fit the lessons to the tastes of the pupil, and as Theodore recalled:

> There was very little effort made to compel me to read good books, my father and mother having the good sense not to try to get me to read anything I did not like, unless it was in the way of study. I was given the chance to read books that they thought I ought to read, but if I did not like them I was then given some other good book that I did like.22

Theodore fell in love with books at an early age --as a toddler he became attached to Livingstone's Travel and Researches in Africa which he carried to his parents so they could tell him stories about the pictures in the book.

Instantly responsive to his son's preferences, Theodore's father noticed that the boy had taken an interest in natural history. Right away he bought him the best introductory books on the subject, and later arranged for him to take taxidermy lessons. When the boy's interest in natural history blossomed into a large collection of skins, skeletons, and stuffed creatures, the inconvenience and smell was tolerated for the sake of Theodore's education. It is not surprising that with his

parents' encouragement behind him Theodore went on to found his own amateur museum and Natural History Club, and he published articles about the species and habits of birds that he had discovered, exhibiting not only advanced knowledge of ornithology but a strong sense of himself as an expert. Of course class mattered in all of Theodore's education. For instance, his study of natural history was considerably enhanced by the fact that his father was one of the founders and contributors to the American Museum of Natural History. Because of his class background Theodore was treated to private showings of newly acquired collections of mounted birds and mammals, but he was allowed to talk with the naturalist Albert Bickmore who ran the Museum, and Bickmore understandably treated the young Roosevelt heir with deference and helpfulness.[23] As Theodore recalled, his parents watched over his education with great love and care, and they "encouraged me warmly in this, as they always did in anything that could give me wholesome pleasure or help to develop me." They believed, as he did when he became a parent, in "making education interesting and not letting it become a task."[24]

Along with the enrichment of Theodore's education came an equivalent richness in his sense of self. Unlike the children who were schooled in large groups, dealt with as drones who because of their low birth would be destined never to achieve greatness, Theodore heard implicit messages within his education about his own potential greatness. When he studied history he was not told that he could never aspire to power and influence or that the system was controlled by an unshakable clique at the top--he was told explicitly that the door of opportunity was open to him. Not only was it pointed out to him that other Roosevelts were makers of history, but he was allowed to sit with his father as he talked with John Hay about their

friendship with Lincoln during the Civil War and the inner workings of administration politics during the crisis. When he expressed youthful political views he was respected, and when his father entered the national political arena during the Hayes administration Theodore became his closest confidante. Theodore grew up without a sense of occupational limits in his future--he was from the privileged class and he could do whatever he wanted.[25]

He quickly responded to the important role models made available through his education, and at an early age began to emulate them. He announced, at the boyhood founding of his own Roosevelt Museum of Natural HIstory, that he would serve as the resident ornithologist, the resident naturalist, and President of the Roosevelt library. He wrote articles as if his expertise were on a par with any professional man of science and delivered them to his colleagues in the Natural History Society he had founded.[26] His family encouraged the development of his incipient professional identity, and when he announced that he planned to become a man of science, preferably a hunter-naturalist, his father did not thwart his wishes. Theodore also learned from the informal messages within his education that his opinions about books were substantial and worth of adult attention; it would not take long before he was turning out his own book reviews. The idea of writing a book intimidates most youngsters, but Theodore thought nothing of it. Many of his father's acquaintances had written books, his uncle Robert had written several, so Theodore not only saved meticulous details of his own daily life in diaries as if they were of historic significance worth saving for a future book, but he began an ambitious history of the War of 1812 while he was only an undergraduate at Harvard. Few tasks seemed to intimidate Theodore,

for the identity that had developed through the years of careful education was based upon a confident and competent sense of broad options that lay before him because of his upper classness.[27]

High self-regard and high self-expectations go hand in hand in the upper class child's educational experience. When Robert Coles interviewed privileged children about the pressures upon them he heard a great deal about the need to "measure up" --to live up to the high standards of excellence set for them by parents, community and teachers.[28] Theodore too had to live up to class-appropriate ego ideals. His father "would not tolerate" in his son any "selfishness or cruelty, idleness, cowardice, or untruthfulness."[29] When the Roosevelt children play acted during the summer their father expected them to really perform and he "drilled us tirelessly" always exerting "energetic guidance" whenever it seemed to him that his offspring had not been living up to their full potential.[30] Partly because of Theodore's father being a rigid moralist and partly because of complex psychological factors that I have examined elsewhere, Theodore Roosevelt came to hold himself to exceedingly high standards. He often pushed himself to the point of exhaustion and beyond to meet his ego ideal. Though some men might be satisfied to have been the author of over twenty books, a loving father and husband, President and Vice President of the United States, Governor of New York, a decorated and nationally honored war hero, among other accomplishments, Theodore was never satisfied with himself. His ego ideals were so high that he kept driving himself onward until he died, exhausted and beaten down by constant striving, at the early age of fifty-eight. While important psychological factors obviously interacted with the exceptionally high

goals he set for himself, the height of Theodore's ego ideals were raised that much higher by the awareness he gained in his educational experiences about the possibilities of his own life as a member of the upper class.

Because his parents allowed him to experiment with professional roles and they allowed him to choose many of his own subjects of study, Theodore developed early a great autonomy and independence of authority. As they encouraged him to become expert in certain fields, his parents also offered to let him play teacher, and he instructed his younger siblings about natural history, comfortably assuming the role of responsibility and authority without a second thought. Very few students today are ever allowed the opportunity to trade roles with their teacher, to develop an expertise that would surpass the teacher's knowledge, to engage in activities as Theodore did. Theodore learned quickly that teachers were not all-knowing authorities, and he learned that he could replace and usurp the teacher. This lack of intimidation by authority would bring him trouble, however, when he finally did enter an educational institution outside family and tutors.

Until Theodore entered Harvard in 1876 his place at the center of his education had never been challenged, and he therefore did not adjust easily to the system of professors lecturing to students who deferentially accepted and memorized whatever they were told. Theodore was not used to being deferential, especially not to professors who were usually his social inferiors. Soon Theodore became known around campus as a student who challenged authority, who was an "energetic questioner of the lecturers."[31] According to one of his classmates Roosevelt was always asking questions, "always pinning the instructor down to hairbreadth points."[32] Shocked at

Theodore's aggressiveness as he "interrogated" his professors as freely as he might have quizzed a tutor hired by his father, the other students did not dare to do the same.[33] Finally his geology professor, after being interrupted by him on many occasions, exclaimed with irritation in his voice, "Now look here, Roosevelt, let me talk. I'm running this course."[34]

Theodore believed he was intellectually superior to his classmates and wrote home disapprovingly that few of them were interested in scholarly questions. He wrote to Corinne that he was pleased when he found exceptions to his rule : "My respect for the mental qualities of my classmates has much increased lately, by the way, as they now no longer seem to think it necessary to confine their conversation exclusively to athletic subjects."[35] In the long run Theodore's dedication to academics paid off, and his record at Harvard was excellent. He earned a Phi Beta Kappa key and graduated with honors. No matter how he differed from and looked critically at the other elite men at Harvard, it mattered to him that there was a distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen. Class consciousness was an unspoken part of Theodore's upbringing, and he came to measure his own success at Harvard in class terms. He kept a watchful eye upon the men of his own class, writing in his senior year that "I stand 19th in the class....Only one gentleman stands ahead of me."[36] However, Theodore was also concerned about class socially. He wrote home to his sister that "I most sincerely wish I knew something about the antecedents of my friends. On this very account I have avoided being very intimate with the New York fellows."[37] Theodore was not afraid to mix with members of the lower orders being "perfectly willing to talk to others if (the) occasion arose."[38]

Soon after Theodore left Harvard he made a decision. He said he "intended to be one of the governing class..."[39] He had been taught that he was special throughout his education, and it seemed logical to seek a professional outlet for his habit of being on center stage. One privileged child observed by Coles defined graphically the specialness that Theodore felt about himself. She drew a picture of a crowd of children waiting to see Santa Claus. Standing near Santa was a mob of children, but the little girl drew herself as separate, larger, and on a higher plane than the others. Her specialness was underscored by a thin line which she drew around herself, denoting a boundary which could not be crossed.[40] When he graduated from Harvard and entered politics, Theodore had not yet developed any reform philosophy to guide him, but he said that he "went into politics at this time "without the set purpose to benefit other people, but of getting for myself a privilege to which I was entitled..."[41]

He took for granted that he deserved wealth, advantages, and the political power which he had learned belonged to his class. Nevertheless he was also taught, with each lesson of study, that it was his duty to exercise stewardship over the other classes. Noblesse oblige was a philosophy that justified the status quo between the classes--that the wealthy deserve to be on top as long as they were benign and generous in exercising their God-given perogatives. Theodore, echoing the philosophy of government distributed social justice behind his Square Deal, stated his upper class view of the necessity to preserve noblesse oblige: "I need hardly say how earnestly I believe that men should have a keen and lively sense of their obligations in politics, of their duty to help forward great causes, and to struggle for the better-

ment of conditions that are unjust to their fellows, the men and women who are less fortunate in life."[42] Robert Coles defines entitlement as "an important psychological common denominator,....an emotional expression, really, of those familiar, class-bound prerogatives, money and power."[43] Coles' entitlement is merely the common emotional tendency among wealthy children to feel deserving of privilege, to see themselves as birthright recipients with "an enhanced expectation of what life has to offer,"[44] and their tendency to view themselves as special, above the common herd. Theodore's education bestowed upon him a lasting sense of entitlement, and it taught him what it meant to be upper class--he learned class roles just as poor children do today in ghetto schools. The possibilities, the ego ideals, the boundaries of his sense of self, and his identity were molded by the informal messages of class entitlement.

The purpose of this paper is to raise the question: Are our schools stifling the identities, the human possibilities of the children of America by teaching them the informal messages of class roles? Nowhere in American political philosophy is there a claim for the equal right to self-esteem, yet that right seems to be inherent in our concepts of liberty and our belief that public schools should serve as a powerful equalizing force that will strengthen and preserve democratic traditions. When James Bryant Conant made his classic statement about the possibilities of American education in Education and Liberty he called our system of educating the young a "great engine of democracy."[45] As this paper suggests, equality of identity, equality of self-regard and a classless educational system are far from the current reality.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]Robert Coles, Privileged Ones, Children of Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1977), Vol. V, p. 395.

[2]Ibid., p. 395.

[3]Alan Graebner, "Growing Up Female," in James P. Spradley and Michael A. Rynkiewich, The Nacirema (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1975), p. 23.

[4]Ibid., p. 23. On the general issue of how culture is transmitted and transformed through education, see the provocative views of George D. Spindler, "The Transmission of Culture," in G. Spindler, ed., Education and Culture (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1963) and Jules Henry, Culture Against Man (N.Y.: Random House, 1963). An excellent introduction to the varied ways in which culture and education interact is George D. Spindler, (ed.) Education and Cultural Process (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1974).

[5]Robert Rosenthal and L. Jacobsen, Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectations and Pupils Intellectual Development (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

[6]Howard Becker, "Social Class Variations in Teacher-Pupil Relationships," Journal of Educational Sociology, 25 (1952).

[7]Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 22.

[8]Ibid., p. 21.

[9]Peter G. Filene, Him/Her Self: Sex Roles in Modern America (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), pp. 73-75.

[10]Sennett and Cobb, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

[11]Coles, op. cit., p. 405.

[12]Ibid., p. 395. By now it must be obvious that there is a difference between the informal messages or internalization of class roles argument I am proposing here

and the model of educational inequality via social structural limitations propounded by Christopher Jenks and others. Limited economic resources and restricted opportunity, of course, are tremendously important--the sheer fact of poverty overrides a person's perception of what he might do within those limitations. But social structural limitations are not the only "hidden injuries of class"--self-esteem is another.

[13]Barbara Finkelstein, "Reading, Writing and the Acquisition of Identity in the United States: 1790-1860," in Barbara Finkelstein, (ed.) Regulated Children/Liberated Children: Education in Psychohistorical Perspective (N.Y.: Psychohistory Press, 1979).

[13a] In the field of social psychology, scholars have examined how self-perception, social interaction, and social roles are interconnected. See George J. McCall and J.L. Simmons, Identities and Interactions (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1966).

[13b]Although theoretically ego psychology is the foundation upon which this paper has been written, other fields have been influential as well.

The phrase "making sense" comes from ethnomethodology and the idea of informal messages comes from the ethnomethodological concern with how social meaning in everyday life is accomplished on the most practical levels. From a particular ethnomethodological viewpoint R. P. McDermott writes:

> "At school age, the point at which children start acquiring their institutional biographies, rational messages continue in their dominance over information transfer. This is a decisive and delicate time in a child's life. School success, an essential ingredient in any child's avoidance of pariah status, is dependent upon high levels of information transfer. In these early stages of school, depending upon how the politics of everyday life are handled, the child defines his relations with his classmates and his teachers. . . . The wrong messages of relationship can result in learning disabilities. ... Children deal seriously in relationships, are profoundly affected by their abilities to do rational work, and acquire a social status and attendant skills on the basis of their success and failures.", p. 90.

See McDermott, "Achieving School Failure: An

Anthropological Approach to Illiteracy and Social Stratification," in Spindler, Education and Cultural Process. Purist ethmethodologists would not agree that this "making sense" function--i.e. shared techniques for constructing meaning in everyday life--has anything to do with the ego psychologists' concern with the ego's need to manage, rationalize, explain away, or remove ambiguity from new or uncomfortable social settings or interactions, but "making sense" is first and foremost a universal ego function.

[14]Theodore Roosevelt to Dear Sir, Vol. I, p. 67, May 1, 1884. Elting E. Morison, (ed.) The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951) and Kathleen Dalton, "The Early Life of Theodore Roosevelt," Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md., 1979.

[15]Dalton, "Early Life;" Joseph Lash, Eleanor and Franklin (N.Y.: New American Library, 1971), p. 29; Edward Pessen, Riches, Class and Power Before the Civil War (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1973).

[16]Dalton, "Early Life;" Charles Barney Whittelsey (compiler and publisher) Roosevelt Genealogy (Hartford, Conn.: Press of J.B. Burrt Co., 1902); Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), pp. 1-5.

[17]Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, Jan. 10, 1904. Henry Adams, Selected Letters (N.Y.: Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1951), pp. 241-242.

> "We were overwhelmed in a torrent of oratory, and at last I heard only the repetition of I-I-I- attached to indiscretions greater one than another until only the British female seemed to survive."

[18]Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 19.

[19]Ibid., p. 21.

[20]Theodore Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt's Diaries of Boyhood and Youth (N.Y.: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1928) is a document which sheds light on the varied educational advantages given to Theodore Roosevelt as a boy. See also Gay Wilson Allen, William James: A Biography (London: Hart-Davis, 1967).

[21]Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, My Brother Theodore Roosevelt (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 93.

[22]Theodore Roosevelt, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 15.

[23]"An Autobiography of Albert S. Bickmore" with a historical sketch of the Founding and Early Development of the American Museum of Natural History, typescript manuscript 1908, Rare Book Room, American Museum of Natural History, New York.

[24]Theodore Roosevelt, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 17.

[25]Dalton, "Early Life of Theodore Roosevelt."

[26]Mss. Records of the Natural History Society, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[27]Dalton, "Early Life of Theodore Roosevelt."

[28]Coles, op. cit., p. 406.

[29]Theodore Roosevelt, Autobiography, op. cit., p.168.

[30]Fanny Parsons, Perchance Someday, privately printed 1951, Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Widener Library, Harvard University.

[31]Carleton Putnam, Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. I, The Formative Years 1858-1886, (N.Y.: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1958), p. 219.

[32]Donald Wilhelm, Theodore Roosevelt as an Undergraduate (Boston, 1910), p. 32.

[33]Putnam, op. cit., p. 140.

[34]Wilhelm, op. cit., p. 35.

[35]Theodore Roosevelt to Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, Oct. 28, 1877, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[36]Theodore Roosevelt, Letters, I, 41-42.

[37]Theodore Roosevelt to Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, Nov. 26, 1876, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[38]Putnam, op. cit., p. 131, also see footnote 11.

[39]Theodore Roosevelt, Autobiography, op. cit.,p.56.

[40]Coles, op. cit., p. 378.

[41]Theodore Roosevelt, Autobiography, op. cit. p.61.

[42]Ibid., pp. 61-62.

[43]Coles, op. cit., p. 363.

[44]Ibid., p. 391. Asking teachers to step back and examine their own cultural assumptions is an obvious first step toward eliminating the class-related informal messages conveyed to students. This is suggested in an article which explores the cultural conflict one teacher observed and attempted to overcome while working with Kwakiutl Indian children. See Harvy F. Wolcott, "The Teacher as An Enemy," in Spindler, Education and Cultural Process,op. cit., pp. 411-425.

[45]James Bryant Conant, Education and Liberty (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. xi.